



Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development

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## **U.S., Canada, and Mexico Submit Proposal to Reduce Super Greenhouse Gases Under Ozone Treaty**

Washington, D.C., September 15, 2009 – Today, on the eve of the International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer, and for the first time in the history of the Montreal Protocol ozone treaty, the North American leaders submitted a joint proposal today to amend the treaty explicitly for climate protection. The proposal would phase down hydrofluorocarbons, or HFCs, chemicals used as substitutes for CFCs and HCFCs in refrigeration and foam blowing.

The potential climate benefits could be up to 170 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide-equivalent by 2050. For comparison, the Kyoto Protocol is seeking 10 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent in its initial commitment period 2008-2012.

“The North American leaders know a good climate treaty when they see one” said Durwood Zaelke, President of the Institute for Governance & Sustainable Development, “and so far, the Montreal Protocol is the world’s best climate treaty.” Without aggressive action, HFC emissions could equal up to 45 percent of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 2050, under a scenario where CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are stabilized at 450 parts per million.

Today’s proposal follows up the commitment to phase down HFCs made 10 August 2009 by President Obama, President Calderon, and Prime Minister Harper in their North American Leaders *Declaration on Climate Change and Clean Energy*.

The North American proposal builds on the original proposal submitted by the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and Mauritius in April. FSM, Mauritius, and a growing group of island States support the proposal as a fast-action climate mitigation strategy that can help avoid passing the temperature thresholds for abrupt climate changes, including meters of sea-level rise.

“With the joint proposal by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, we now have the muscle to move the Montreal Protocol amendment this year in Egypt,” said Amb. Yosiwo George, FSM Ambassador to the U.S. “We are eager to join forces and bring home this critical victory for climate.”

“Using the Montreal Protocol to protect the climate is a key complement to the climate treaty itself, which still has the Herculean task of tackling the 50% of climate forcing from carbon dioxide pollution,” added Zaelke. “We need to remember, however, that while it’s essential to cut carbon dioxide, even if we stopped all emissions today we wouldn’t get significant cooling

for at least 1,000 years.”

“The other 50% of climate forcing, including HFCs, is the faster 50%,” Zaelke said. “The fast half also includes black carbon soot, ground level ozone, and methane. We have to act on the whole 100%. We can’t win if we only target half the problem.”

“Success with this strategy in Egypt in November when the Montreal Protocol Parties hold their annual meeting would be a big boost to the climate negotiations the following month in Copenhagen,” said Samuel LaBudde, senior U.S. climate campaigner for the Environmental Investigation Agency.

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